THE TORCH OF REASON, SILVERTON, OREGON, THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 1898.

An Agnostic Talk.

An Agnostic is one who does not deal in remote futures. He does not believe in Christianity or Spiritualism, and so does not pay its preachers or the medium. He does not believe in Materialism or Pantheism, and keeps out of them also. If he believes anything it is that the origin and destiny of man are unknown, perhaps unknowable, and that all the time a man employs trying to solve these mysteries might be used to some better pur-Nose! Like a horse that has tried several times to pull a heavy load and failed, he becomes balky and sighs whenever he contemplates the difficulties behind and before him.

The Agnostic is on the fence between Spiritism and Materialism. He would get down on one side or the other if he could only feel certain that he was getting on the side of fact. He is too conscientious to pretend to believe that which his judgment says is not proven. He would be as glad as any one to know that there is a better time beyond the grave, but he is not the kind of a man to be led into a belief because such a belief might bring happiness. As a man can not feel that he has money unless he has the cash on hand, so an Agnostic cannot feel that he has a loving father in heaven, and an immortal soul to be lost or saved, unless he could interview this imaginary person and thing. dence it takes to convin e some people that a god analagous to ourselves, only more perfect, exists, and that there will be a day of judgment on which the sheep will be separated from the goats, and the sheep will be sent to heaven to

anybod - for not believing it.

Men will not, as a rule, buy land unless they are sure the title is good, but they will invest in a chance of obtaining a foothold in the sweet fields of Eden on the other side of Jordan, although the title to this "happy bappy land" is as cloudy as a London fog.

Agnosticism is purely scientific. It is founded on the fact that the human mind, like the telescope, has its limits. We can see a great way, but not as far as we try to see. The man who believes in God and immortality is like an astronomer who would look through his telescope and tell not what he sees, but what he would like to see in the distance. It is immoral from the Agnostic standpoint to make a life study of theology when all one's time is needed to learn science. An acquaintance with Nature is more pleasant and profitable in every way than an idle endeavor to know God and prove immortality.

Agnosticism is neither optimistic nor pessimistic. Some Agnostics are more inclined to optimism and others to pessimism. Some would re-live their lives had they the power and others would prefer something better or nothing. The aggregate of human misery may outweigh the aggregate of human joy, or vice versa, or they may just balance. Agnosticism gives no two good houses, fruit trees, etc. Will ing land, well improved, good running hope nor produces any despair. It trade for farm land is too moral to deceive. Agnostics It is wonderful how little evi- do not tell their little children \$750. ghost stories to make them better. They tell their children that a little child knows no less or no more about god and immortality than a grown person. A child ten years old can see as many stars as a grown person, and it knows just as In religion it takes credulity to when there is no ground on which All hunters have seen dogs bark sure there were squirrels or 'opos- tion. Yours for business, sums among the branches or in the trunk, but when the tree was cut down and explored the dogs would have to admit that they were mistaken. Now these people who pray to God may some day have to admit they were mistaken about God Agnostics do not deny that there is a power in the world that has created and does sustain plant and animal life. But they do not know Christians convict a man on such the nature of this force. We see evidence as they use in proof of its work, much of it very beautiful, their religion. All the evidence we and all of it very wonderful, but cannot get even a glimpse of the worker. So little is known about our creator that if some one were to say, "He is water," no one could better proof of their creeds, but they or if some one were to say, "He is cannot obtain anything but fancies. the sun," who could prove he is not the sun? In law the prisoner is given the Neither is anything known about benefit of a doubt and set at liberty human consciousness after the may know less or we may be the same old fools that we have always

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"get there", for there is no evidence to walk. worthy of the name to support this religion.

In the courts it takes real evidence to convince, but in churches sham evidence is used entirely, and outside of church and religion Christians are as skeptical as other people. In obtaining a jury a man is not chosen because he is or is not being somewhere in the sky. a believer in the supernatural. Infidels are no more apt to clear a mar than Christians. Neither will have of the divinity of Jesus would not convict a wolf of killing sheep in Texas. The Christians would like to have more evidence and say knowingly "He is not water,"

onable doubt. Now unless Christians can prove clearly to all that their religion is more than fancy been .-- [E. L. Merrill in Independthey ought not to think any less of ent Pulpit.

suit purchaser.

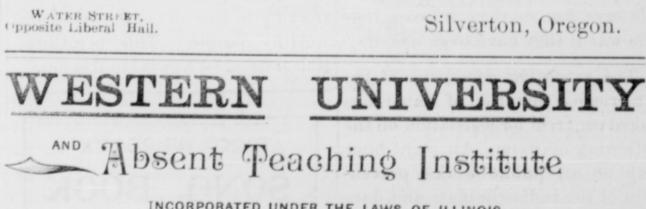
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